

As a first-generation American, I know first hand the tremendous contributions immigrants have made to our nation. The 9th Congressional District of Illinois is one of the most diverse in the country. In fact, 40% of our residents speak a language other than English at home and one-third came as immigrants. Our neighbors come from all corners of the globe, as evidenced by the fifty-some languages spoken at many of our schools. As a nation and a community, we are indebted to the immigrants who came here to make a better life for their families, bringing with them their dreams, their culture (including great food), and commitment to hard work. Our diversity is our greatest strength.

### ***Comprehensive Immigration Reform***

Everyone knows that America's immigration system is broken and in desperate need of reform. I support a comprehensive approach that creates orderly and enforceable regulation of immigration, allows people to fill jobs that don't attract American workers, requires those who are here illegally to step forward, register with the government so we can know who's here, and, if they have no criminal history, requires them to get work permits, pay their taxes, learn English, get legal status and eventually qualify for citizenship. These principles are all part of the legislation that I am proud to co-sponsor, [H.R. 4321, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for American Security and Prosperity \(CIR ASAP\) Act](#).

### **Key Actions I've taken on Immigration:**

Cosponsor of [H.R. 3604, Senior Citizenship Act of 2009](#). This bill would make it easier for seniors who have a limited understanding of English to become citizens as long as they are over 65 years old and have been lawful permanent residents of the United States for five years. H.R. 3604 would exempt immigrants who are over 65 years old and have been lawful permanent residents of the United States for at least five years from having to take the English literacy exam.

Cosponsor of [H.R. 1024, the Uniting American Families Act of 2009](#). This bill would eliminate one form of discrimination in our immigration laws by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status in the same manner as spouses of citizens and lawful permanent residents.

Cosponsor of [H.R. 2709, the Reuniting American Families Act](#) . This bill takes important steps to reduce the waiting times for legal immigrants applying for citizenship , by reducing the long backlog for families trying to reunite with their loved ones, and by increasing per country limits from 7 percent to 10 percent so that nations with a higher demand for workers can better equip the American economy with talent.

Cosponsor of [H.R. 1751, the American DREAM Act](#). This bill would give students who have good moral character and have lived in the U.S. for at least five years the opportunity to be eligible for college scholarships, regardless of their immigration status. It enables those students to apply to become legal permanent residents.

### **Press Releases:**

April 2010

[Schakowsky's Statement on Arizona's Excessive Immigration Law](#)

### **Additional Information:**

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights [summary of the CIR ASAP Act](#) .

### **In the News:**

[VIDEO: CBS Evening News, "Fury over Immigrant Law" - April 28, 2010](#)

